

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4622
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USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 1509

AF FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: SHUM, PEPR, GV,US
SUBJECT: SECRETARY VANCE INVITED TO VISIT GUINEA; GUINEA INTENDS
TO CONTINUE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

REF: CONAKRY 1477

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER BEAVOGUI HAS MADE STRONG
BID FOR SECRETARY TO VISIT GUINEA BRIEFLY IN COURSE OF
OTHER TRAVEL ABROAD TO SEE SITUATION HERE FOR HIMSELF.
PM NOTED VISIT HERE BY OFFICIAL OF INTERNATIONAL COM-
MITTEE OF RED CROSS (ICRC) HAD BROUGHT NO IMPROVED US
UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN GUINEA. PM
SAID WE COOULD EXPECT POLITICAL PRISONER RELEASES TO
CONTINUE, BIT IT WOULD BE "DIFFICULT" FOR GOG TO RELEASE
ALL OF THEM AT ONCE. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR WAS CALLED TO PRIME MINISTER BEAVOGUI'S
OFFICE ON SHORT NOTICE AUGUST 5. WITH DCM AND PRIME
MINISTERS'S DIRECTOR OF CABINET ALPHA IBRAHIMA DIALLO
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PRESENT, BEAVOGUI CAM RIGHT TO THE POINT, ANNOUNCING
THAT GOG WOULD LIKE TO INVITE SECRETARY VANCE TO VISIT
GUINEA. PM REALIZED HOW BUSY THE SECRETARY IS BUT SAID
NOW THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE HAS BEEN TO CONAKRY,
GOG HOPES SECRETARY COULD SPEND JUST ONE DAY HERE IN
THE COURSE OF ONE OF HIS TRIPS ABROAD.

3. BEAVOGUI RECALLED THAT AT TIME OF HIS US VISIT IN JUNE 1977 HE HAD INVITED AMBASSADOR YOUNG, VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE AND INTERESTED SENATORS, CONGRESSMEN AND PRESS CORRESPONDENTS TO VISIT GUINEA. GOG RECOGNIZED THAT US HAD CONCERNS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION, SO IT HAD SUGGESTED A HIGH-LEVEL USG DELEGATION COME TO SEE FOR ITSELF; VISITORS COULD GO ANYWHERE, DO ANYTHING, ASK ANYTHING, SEE ANYTHING THEY WANTED. HE ADDED REGRETFULLY THAT USG HAD NOT ACCEPTED THIS INVITATION, PREFERRING THAT ICRC SEND A DELEGATION INSTEAD. GOG HAD CONSENTED AND INVITED ICRC: THE MATTER DRAGGED ON, THE DELEGATION ICRC PLANNED TO SEND WAS CUT FROM THREE TO TWO AND FINALLY ONLY ONE CAME, AND SINCE HIS VISIT GOG HAD HEARD NOTHING FURTHER. PM INDICATED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THIS APPEARED A DEAD END. DIALLO WAS LATER MORE EXPLICIT, SAYING THE US HAD IN EFFECT PASSED THE BUCK TO ICRC. GOG WOULD NEVER HAVE INVITED RED CROSS BUT DID SO BECAUSE WE HAD ASKED; NOW, THEY SAW NO RESULTS FROM THE VISIT, WHICH APPEARED TO HAVE DONE NO GOOD AT ALL. AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT TO BEAVOGUI THAT ICRC REPRESENTATIVE SCHMIDT HAD TOLD US RED CROSS REPORT WOULD GO ONLY RPT ONLY TO GOG. SCHMIDT HAD MENTIONED POSSIBILITY OF A SECOND VISIT - HAD THERE BEEN ANYTHING FURTHER ON THAT; BEAVOGUI REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE.

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4. AMBASSADOR SAID WE WOULD NOT WANT TO INTERFERE WITH ACTIVITIES OF ICRC, BUT VISITS BY AMERICANS SHOULD BE USEFUL, INCREASING CONTACT AND UNDERSTANDING. WE HOPED IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO GET AMBASSADOR YOUNG HERE SOMETIME; SECRETARY VANCE IS A MORE DIFFICULT PROPOSITION BECAUSE OF HIS EVEN HEAVIER SCHEDULE, BUT WE WOULD PASS ON THE INVITATION. AMBASSADOR ASKED FOR CONFIRMATION THAT PRESS CORRESPONDENTS COULD RECEIVE GUINEAN VISAS, TRAVEL FREELY ABOUT THE COUNTRY, TALK WITH PEOPLE, ETC. PM CONFIRMED THIS AND SAID BEST WAY TO CLEAR UP HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS TO TO SEE FOR ONESELF. HE COMPLAINED THAT USG BELIEVES ALLEGATIONS OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND OTHER DETRACTORS WHO ARE MOTIVATED BY HOSTILITY TOWARD GUINEA BUT USG WILL NOT LISTEN TO WHAT GOG ITSELF SAYS AND ALWAYS DEMANDS MORE FACTS AND FIGURES. AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THAT WITHOUT FACTS AND FIGURES IT IS DIFFICULT TO REBUT ACCUSATIONS; WE HAVE BEEN REPORTING POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE IN GUINEA, RELAXED RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES, RELEASES OF PRISONERS, ETC., BUT IT WOULD HELP TO HAVE MORE SPECIFIC INFORMATION. PM ASKED WHAT SORT OF INFORMATION; AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED NUMBER OF PRISONERS HELD OR

RELEASED. PM ASKED WHAT GOVERNMENT WOULD GIVE OUT SUCH INFORMATION BUT ADDED THAT,AS PRESIDENT TOURE HAD TOLD ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE AUGUST 3, FACTS OF THE CASE WERE WELL KNOWN; MANY OF THOSE CONDEMNED TO DEATH HAD BEEN RELEASED AND SOME EVEN REHABILITATED INTO POSITIONS OF TRUST IN THE GOVERNMENT. WE COULD EXPECT RELEASES TO CONTINUE, BUT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO RELEASE ALL PRISONERS AT ONCE BECAUSE OF POPULAR FEELING AGAINST THEM. THOSE WHOSE OFFENSES ARE LESS SERIOUS WILL BE RELEASED EARLIER,THE OTHERS LATER. HE ASSERTED THAT MANY WHO HAD BEEN RELEASED HAD SERVED ONLY A QUARTER OR AN EIGHTH OF THEIR PRISON SENTENCES.

5. COMMENT: PRIME MINISTER IS CLEARLY DISAPPOINTED
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AT LACK OF RESULTS FROM ICRC VISIT WHICH HE REGARDS A BLIND ALLEY INTO WHICH USG SHUNTED GOG IN ORDER TO AVOID RESPONSIBILITY OF ITSELF EVALUATING THE STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN GUINEA. INVITATION TO SECRETARY VANCE REFLECTS GOG DESIRE TO BUILD ON VERY SUCCESSFUL MOOSE VISIT AND ACHIEVE CLOSER ASSOCIATION WITH AND GREATER UNDERSTANDING FROM USG.

6. THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A BASIS MISUNDERSTANDING OVER THE ICRC ROLE: GUINEA BELIEVES US WAS SENDING RED CROSS AS ITS REPRESENTATIVE TO SURVEY GUINEAN HUMAN RIGHTS AND REPORT ITS FINDINGS, RED CROSS, ON THE OTHER HAND, APPARENTLY HAS FELT THAT IT COULD NOT ACT FOR AND SUBMIT REPORTS TO A THIRD COUNTRY AND STILL MAINTAIN ITS CREDIBILITY AS AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE ARE NOT SURE GOG WOULD ACCEPT SECOND ICRC VISIT TO EXAMINE PRISON CONDITIONS AND INTERVIEW PRISONERS UNLESS USG URGED THIS STRONGLY AND MADE CLEAR THAT ICRC FINDINGS, IF REASONABLY FAVORABLE, WOULD SATISFY THE USG REGARDING GUINEA'S HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: IN LIGHT ABOVE AND IN INTEREST OF ACHIEVING SOME FORWARD MOVEMENT IN THIS DIFFICULT AREA, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO FOLLOWING:

A. WHAT CAN WE SAY TO GOG TO CONVINCE THEM THAT SECOND ICRC VISIT COULD HAVE HELPFUL IMPACT ON USG THINKING RE GUINEAN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION?

B. HAS THERE BEEN ANY ACTIVITY ON PART OF ICRC SINCE MARCH 1978 VISIT TO GUINEA? WHEN MIGHT ICRC CONTEMPLATE SOME FOLLOW-UP ACTION? END ACTION REQUEST.

8. FURTHER COMMENT: IN ANY EVENT,IT IS HELPFUL TO HAVE BEAVOGUI'S
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ASSURANCE THAT PRISONER RELEASES WILL CONTINUE. HE DID
NOT, HOWEVER, SUGGEST ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS WILL BE
RELEASED BY A SPECIFIC TIME, SUCH AS END 1978, AS SOME
SOURCES HAVE INDICATED. END COMMENT.
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